

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Status of the Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* in the Sudan

The status of the Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* in the Sudan given by Cave & Macdonald (1955) was "Rather uncommon, doubtfully breeding on the Red Sea coast." After various field trips to the Sudan Red Sea coast between the autumn of 1980 and spring of 1983, more information had come to light (Nikolaus 1987).

The Crab Plover is a breeding visitor to Sudan arriving in early April, when it is regularly seen in parties of up to 40 around Suakin (19°05N, 37°20E) feeding in shallow tidal bays. Around noon small parties often depart further north. It was found breeding on Two Islets, Suakin Archipelago (18°35N, 37°45E) by R.J. Moore (R.J. Moore and M.A. Balsarotti, pers. comm., and 1983), who found several used burrows in June 1983. It is probable that it nests on a few other islands as well. From August onwards, Crab Plovers, leading young birds, are found all along the coast, at least as far north as 21°30N (south of Halaib). Egg laying should take place between the end of May and early June. In 1982 there was, on average, one young bird per ten adults.

The adult birds begin wing moult at the end of June—beginning of August and leave for the south between September and the middle of October, being halfway through the moult. There is no indication, however, that they suspend their moult.

Weights (g) of birds arriving in April are ( $n = 9$ ) 295.6 (265–345); departing birds between August and October weighed, adults: ( $n = 12$ ) 336.7 (270–390), first year birds ( $n = 5$ ) 281 (255–310).

Approximately 500 Crab Plovers spend the breeding season in the Sudan, and of this number, 50 pairs were breeding successfully in 1982.

## References

- CAVE, F.O. & MACDONALD, M.A. 1955. *Birds of the Sudan*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd.  
MOORE, R.J. & BALSAROTTI, M.A. 1983. Observations of sea birds nesting on islands of the Sudanese Red Sea. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 103: 65–71.  
NIKOLAUS, G. 1987. Distribution atlas of Sudan's birds with notes on habitat and status. *Bonner Zoologische Monographien* 25: 1–322.

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## NOTICE—MALAWI RARITIES COMMITTEE

A Rarities Committee has been formed to deal with additions to the list of avifauna found in Malawi, sightings of rare birds and extensions of the known range of any species. Anyone finding or seeing a bird in one of these categories is requested to apply to the address below for a rare bird form. To ascertain what is unknown or rare in Malawi or any part thereof, see *The birds of Malawi* (Benson, C.W. & Benson, F.M., 1977. Limbe (Malawi): Montfort Press).

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